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Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-sixth session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Valery Zhdanovich (Belarus)

Addendum

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2008-2009

(Item 3 (b))

Programme 15

Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific

1. At its 12th meeting, on 23 August 2006, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered programme 15, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, of the proposed biennial programme plan (A/61/6 (Prog. 15)).
2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. Support was expressed for the proposed strategic framework of the programme.
4. Appreciation was expressed for the work carried out by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in the Asia and the Pacific region. In this connection, and in more general terms, it was observed that the regional commissions were important instruments entrusted with tasks related to development in their respective regions. Further, it was pointed out that the need for regional commissions remained high and that they had demonstrated the ability to adapt to ever-changing atmospheres and circumstances while carrying out the important task of implementing the Millennium Development Goals over a vast



geographical area. It was also observed that the role of ESCAP had become crucial in promoting economic and social development in the region by fostering cooperation among its members and producing catalytic synergies in the quest for a better future.

5. It was observed that despite the economic prosperity and dynamism of parts of the region, those achievements concealed the destitution of the 680 million people, who represented two thirds of the world's poor. It was noted that the region was frequently affected by natural disasters, which threatened efforts towards economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development. It was pointed out that, for all those reasons, priority attention should continue to be accorded to the work of ESCAP.

6. The view was expressed that ESCAP's three thematic priorities were important to the region and appreciation and support were expressed for maintaining the same focus for the period 2008-2009.

7. Progress in the areas of development and trade in the Asia and the Pacific region was acknowledged with satisfaction. Further, ESCAP's new emphasis in responding to the impact of natural disasters, communicable diseases and other issues affecting people and infrastructure in the region was welcomed. It was emphasized that ESCAP had made great efforts in responding to the emerging needs of the people of the regions affected by the impact of these events.

8. It was pointed out that Asia and the Pacific suffered from poverty, lack of investments, natural disasters, drug trafficking etc., and that ESCAP's subprogrammes needed to address those issues and to adapt them to the current situation in the region.

9. The importance of ensuring the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals under subprogramme 1, Poverty and development was emphasized, and further references to capacity-building for the formulation and implementation of policies as part of the indicators of achievement would be desirable. It was further suggested that the strategy of this subprogramme could include a reference to the decision reached at the sixty-second session of the Commission to formulate a road map for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the Asia and the Pacific region at its sixty-third session, in 2007. The road map would establish concrete steps for cooperation in the region geared towards achieving the Goals. It was also emphasized that this subprogramme should take women into consideration, as part of a strategy to undertake activities related to development and poverty eradication. It was noted that access to services was regarded as a crucial element to the attainment of the objective of this subprogramme.

10. It was also observed, with regard to subprogramme 3, Development of Pacific island countries and territories, that one particular feature of the sixty-second session of the Commission, held in Jakarta in April 2006, was the first ever meeting of the Pacific Leaders ESCAP special session. It was further observed that this important occasion would indeed strengthen the Asia-Pacific partnership in such areas as tourism, information and communication technology, trade statistics and the environment. The view was expressed that ESCAP should include a reference to the follow-up activities of the special session in the strategic framework.

11. It was further expressed, with regard to subprogramme 5, Transport and tourism, that the strategic framework could incorporate the latest development on intergovernmental agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network, which was open for signature by ESCAP members and would be adopted in November 2006 during the ministerial conference on transport and subsequently at the United Nations.

12. ESCAP efforts to improve national capacities for the delivery of equitable social services and integration of social dimensions into the development process was appreciated and it was pointed out that subprogramme 8, Social development, including persistent and emerging issues, should accord more attention to disability issues in the region. The need to strengthen ESCAP work and cooperation with other agencies and local governments as part of this subprogramme was observed.

13. The view was expressed that proposals for the implementation of the recommendations of the recently completed external evaluation of ESCAP would be welcomed, and that ESCAP could further emphasize the attention to cross-cutting issues in the overall orientation of the strategic framework. The need for close cooperation with other agencies and entities was again underscored.

14. Support was also expressed for the proposed revisions to the proposed biennial programme plan of programme 15, based on the review of the plan at the special session of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on 23 June 2006, including references to the rights-based approach.

15. The representative of the Secretary-General, in response to questions raised, indicated that attention would be given to qualitative and quantitative performance measures during the formulation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009.

Conclusions and recommendations

16. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 15, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, of the proposed biennial programme plan, subject to the following modifications:

Overall orientation

Paragraph 15.11

Replace the paragraph in its entirety with paragraph 15.9 of document A/59/6/Rev.1, to read:

"15.11 As a matter of priority, the gender dimension and the rights-based as well as development-based approaches for persons with disabilities will be mainstreamed across relevant subprogrammes. Particular attention will be given to achieving in a progressive manner, in diverse development sectors, the rights of vulnerable groups, including women, youth, people with disabilities, older persons and people living with HIV/AIDS, especially among the poor."

Subprogramme 1
Poverty and development

Strategy

Paragraph 15.15

In the third sentence remove the parentheses around the words "including the right to access services".

Subprogramme 2
Statistics

Indicators of achievement

In indicator of achievement (a), after the words "statistical system", insert the words "benefiting from ESCAP and Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific assistance".

Subprogramme 3
Development of Pacific island countries and territories

Strategy

Paragraph 15.18

At end of the first sentence, add the words: "with cooperation from other ESCAP divisions."

Subprogramme 4
Trade and Investment

Indicators of achievement

Delete the word "(stakeholders)" from indicators of achievement (a) (ii), (b) (i), (c), and (d).

In indicators of achievement (a) (ii), (b) (i), (c) and (d), after the word "officials", add the words "and others".

Strategy

Paragraph 15.20

After paragraph 15.20, add the following paragraphs and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly:

"15.21 ESCAP will collaborate at the regional, subregional and national levels and with the agencies within the United Nations system, as well as with other bilateral and multilateral agencies.

"15.22 Additionally, further collaboration will be undertaken with relevant regional, subregional and national intergovernmental bodies, as well as with private sector and civil society organizations and networks within Asia and the Pacific."

Paragraph 15.21

In the last sentence, after the words "priority to", insert the words "developing countries, including".

Subprogramme 5
Transport and Tourism

Paragraph 15.23

At the end of the paragraph, add the following sentence: "The subprogramme will accord priority to developing countries including least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, countries with economies in transition and small island developing States."

Subprogramme 6
Environment and sustainable development

Replace in its entirety with the following:

Subprogramme 6
Environment and sustainable development

Objective of the Organization to improve the environmental sustainability of economic and social development, and natural resources management, in line with internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Improved national capacity to develop and implement policies and programmes that contribute to green growth	(a) Increased percentage of participants in ESCAP activities who indicate that they can use or have used knowledge and skills in applying a green growth approach
(b) Increased national capacity to develop and apply socio-economic policy instruments to improve environmental management and performance	(b) Increased percentage of participants in ESCAP activities who indicate that they can use or have used knowledge and skills in applying socio-economic policy instruments to improve environmental management and performance
(c) Enhanced national capacity to identify effective policies and programmes for efficient and cleaner production, management and use of energy resources on the national, subregional and regional levels	(c) Increased number of measures taken by policymakers and planners in promoting energy security, improving energy efficiency and supporting subregional and regional cooperation in energy sector development
(d) Increased national capacity in formulating and implementing effective sustainable development policies and strategies on management of water resources and natural disasters in particular in disaster-prone countries, in terms of preparedness, response and recovery.	(d) Increased number of measures taken that reflects ESCAP-promoted initiatives on management of water resources and natural disasters in particular increased number of measures in disaster-prone countries to prepare for and respond rapidly to natural disasters and mitigate their impact.

Strategy

15.24 The substantive responsibility for the subprogramme lies with the Environment and Sustainable Development Division. The strategic direction of the subprogramme derives mainly from the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the outcomes of the other related major United Nations conferences and international agreements since 1992 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Shanghai Declaration, the outcome of the fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2005, and other relevant mandates.

15.24 (bis) The subprogramme will focus on using innovative and pragmatic approaches in promoting equitable and environmentally sustainable economic growth. In the area of energy, the subprogramme will promote energy security, improve energy efficiency, enhance utilization of new and renewable sources of energy and assist in further development of regional and subregional energy cooperation. In the area of water resources, the subprogramme will continue to concentrate on capacity-building in strategic planning to promote integrated water resources management, improved access to safe drinking water and water conservation. In the area of the environment, the subprogramme will focus on improving the environmental performance of major stakeholders and promoting effective regional and subregional collaboration in environmental protection. Regional cooperation will be strengthened for natural disaster management. The strategic focus will be on assisting members and associate members to develop and apply gender responsive policies and programmes, where appropriate, in particular towards attaining Millennium Development Goals 1 and 7. It will comprise closely interrelated sectoral projects and interdisciplinary activities implemented jointly with other divisions within the thematic areas of managing globalization, reducing poverty and addressing emerging social issues. The subprogramme will promote wider participation of all stakeholders, including the civil society, in regional and national decision-making processes relating to sustainable development. The subprogramme will accord priority to developing countries including the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, countries with economies in transition and small island developing States. It will also seek to collaborate with other United Nations agencies and international organizations in the development of tools and networks to support the foregoing projects and interdisciplinary activities.

Subprogramme 7

Information, communication and space technology

Indicators of achievement

Replace indicators (c) (i) and (c) (ii) with the following indicator:

“(c) (i) Percentage of policymakers and officials benefiting from activities of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development who indicate that their level of competency has increased in the use of information and communication technology for socio-economic development”

Indicators of achievement

In indicator of achievement (d), after the words "transfer mechanisms", insert the words "supported by the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology".

Paragraph 15.26

In the final sentence, after the words "the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization", insert the words "Asian-Pacific Telecommunity".

At the end of the paragraph, add the following sentence: "The subprogramme will accord priority to developing countries, including the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, countries with economies in transition and small island developing States."

Subprogramme 8

Social development, including persistent and emerging issues

Strategy

Paragraph 15.28

Replace the words "emphasizing a rights-based approach" with the words: "emphasizing the rights-based as well as development-based approaches for persons with disabilities".

Legislative mandates

Add subprogramme 4 to the subprogrammes in parentheses under resolutions 55/279 and 60/228, in the first grouping of General Assembly resolutions.